

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AMEO, PFOR, SOPN, UR, US

SUBJECT: LYMPHOCYTOSIS: PRESS GUIDANCE

REF: (A) STATE 0090; (B) MOSCOW 0170

1. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS TAKEN BY SPOKESMAN AT JAN. 5
PRESS BRIEFING DEPT HAS POSTED FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AND
ANSWERS:

QUESTION: DOES THE DEPARTMENT HAVE A SAMPLING OF BLOOD
COUNT LEVELS AMONG PERSONNEL IN THE MOSCOW EMBASSY TAKEN
PRIOR TO FEBRUARY 1976?

ANSWER: YES. FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL AND THEIR
DEPENDENTS UNDERGO THOROUGH MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS PRIOR TO
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DEPARTING FOR AND RETURNING FROM OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENTS.
THESE EXAMINATIONS ROUTINELY INCLUDE DIFFERENTIAL BLOOD
COUNTS. CONSEQUENTLY, THE DEPARTMENT HAS MEDICAL RECORDS
ON FOREIGN SERVICE EMPLOYEES AND DEPENDENTS, SERVING NOT
ONLY IN MOSCOW PRIOR TO FEBRUARY 1976 BUT IN ALL POSTS

ABROAD, WHICH DOCUMENT LYMPHOCYTE LEVELS. HOWEVER, THE

BLOOD ANALYSIS PROGRAM WE HAVE CONDUCTED IN MOSCOW IS UNIQUE IN THAT IT WAS INITIATED TO DETERMINE IF THERE WAS ANY COROLLATION BETWEEN SOVIET TRANSMISSION AND THE HEALTH OF OUR EMPLOYEES AND THEIR DEPENDENTS. ON THE BASIS OF THIS ANALYSIS, WE HAVE ESTABLISHED THAT NO SUCH CORRELATION EXISTS.

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE LYMPHOCYTE LEVEL AMONG AVERAGE AMERICANS, I.E., AMERICANS OF VARIOUS AGES AND LOCATIONS RESIDING IN THE UNITED STATES?

ANSWER: SUCH SPECIFIC STATISTICS ARE NOT AVAILABLE. THE STATE DEPT. AND, IN GENERAL, THE WESTERN MEDICAL PROFESSION, HOWEVER, RELY ON DATA PUBLISHED BY THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF HEMATOLOGY (VOLUME 33 OF 1976) WHICH INDICATE THAT THE NORMAL LYMPHOCYTE LEVEL FOR ADULTS IS BETWEEN 1158 AND 3460.

QUESTION: HAVE THERE BEEN ANY INCIDENCE OF "POST-CAPILLARY LENS RUPTURING" (POSTERIOR CAPSULAR LENS OPACITY) AMONG MOSCOW FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL?

ANSWER: NO.

QUESTION: DOES THE TERM MOSCOW GROUP REFER TO ALL THOSE TESTED OR ONLY TO THOSE HAVING ELEVATED WHITE CELL COUNTS?

ANSWER: "MOSCOW GROUP" REFERS TO ALL THOSE TESTED. OF THE APPROXIMATELY 30 PERCENT WHO SHOWED ELEVATED COUNTS, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE AVERAGE LEVEL WAS 3900.

QUESTION: HAS OUR TESTING PROGRAM INCLUDED OTHER FOREIGN DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL IN MOSCOW?

ANSWER: NO, BUT WE ARE CONSIDERING SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT.

QUESTION: HAVE WE CHECKED OUR FINDINGS WITH OTHER DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN MOSCOW?

ANSWER: NO. TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OTHER MISSIONS ARE NOT CONDUCTING SIMILAR TESTS.

QUESTION: CAN YOU EXPAND ON THE POSTED ANSWER YESTERDAY REGARDING THE CHANGE IN SIGNAL CHARACTERISTICS, ETC.?

ANSWER: THE DEPARTMENT HAS ALREADY INDICATED PEAK SIGNAL STRENGTH SINCE MAY 1975; HAS EXPLAINED THAT THE STRENGTH OF THE INCOMING SIGNAL WITHOUT PROTECTIVE SCREENING IS

CURRENTLY 2 MICROWATTS PER SQUARE CENTIMETER OR LESS;
AND THAT POTENTIAL EXPOSURE LEVELS IN ALL LIVING AND
WORKING AREAS ARE THEREFORE LESS THAN .25 MICROWATTS PER
SQUARE CENTIMETER.

QUESTION: HAVE ANY MOSCOW EMBASSY PERSONNEL REQUESTED A
TRANSFER FOR HEALTH REASONS OR REASONS WHICH MIGHT BE
ASSOCIATED WITH THE RADIATION OR BLOOD COUNT SITUATION?

ANSWER: NO. AS YOU KNOW, LAST JUNE WE DID MEDICALLY
EVACUATE 2 CHILDREN FROM MOSCOW AFTER ABNORMAL SYMPTOMS
WERE DISCOVERED IN THE COURSE OF THE BLOOD TESTING
PROGRAM. ONE OF THOSE CHILDREN RETURNED TO MOSCOW SHORTLY
THEREAFTER AND THE OTHER REMAINS IN THE UNITED STATES
UNDERGOING TREATMENT FOR CONGENITAL BONE MARROW DEPRESSION.
IN THAT CASE THE FAMILY WAS RETURNED TO THE UNITED STATES
AS WELL SINCE THE TREATMENT AND RECOVERY ARE EXPECTED TO
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BE PROTRACTED. NEITHER OF THESE TWO CASES WAS RELATED
TO THE SOVIET TRANSMISSIONS.

QUESTION: HAS THE USG DISCUSSED THE LYMPHOCYTOSIS
PHENOMENA WITH THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT?

ANSWER: YES. WE HOPE TO RECEIVE INFORMATION ON LYMPHOCYTE
LEVELS IN THE URBAN MOSCOW ENVIRONMENT FOR COMPARATIVE
ANALYSIS WITH OUR OWN FINDINGS AMONG EMBASSY AND OTHER
FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL.

2. PER REF (A), EMBASSY SHOULD CONTINUE TO REFER PRESS
QUESTIONS WHICH GO BEYOND PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT TO DEPT
FOR REPLY.
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